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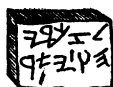
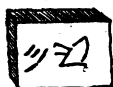
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Two New Hebrew Weights.—By GEORGE A. BARTON, Professor in Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

1. A UNIQUE HEBREW WEIGHT.

LAST winter, while in Jerusalem, I was one day looking over a lot of old coins, which a dealer brought to me, and had the good fortune to find among them a unique Hebrew weight. It is inscribed in old Hebrew characters similar to those on the Hebrew coins of the Asmoneans and the Jewish revolts. It is made of a brassy kind of bronze, and differs in form from any which have been hitherto described. As the accompanying drawings show, it is an irregular cube.



It is $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch long, $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch wide, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch thick at one end, and $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch thick at the other. Its weight is slightly more than $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams, being 120 grains. Its original weight was probably a little greater, since at three different points bits of the bronze have been nicked from the edges, though the amount of bronze thus removed is too slight to make much difference.

The inscription on one side is :

לְזַכְרִיָּהוּ יָאֵר, “Belonging to Zechariah [son of] Yaer (Jaer).” Here, as in the case of several inscribed objects from the Shephelah, the word בֵּן is omitted.¹

It would be interesting could we ascertain something of the history of the owner of this weight. He probably lived at a later period than any of the 27 Zechariahs enumerated by Wellhausen,² or the 29 enumerated by Macpherson.³

The legend on the other side of the weight is much more difficult. While I present below three possible solutions of the

¹ Cf. Bliss and Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine, 1898-1900*, pl. 56.

² *Encycl. Biblica*.

³ Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*.

riddle, I have no great degree of confidence that any one of them is right.

The second and third of the three letters are clearly ' and ם (מ), but concerning the identity of the first there is some question. It has a very close resemblance to the form in which the letter ך appears in many inscriptions,¹ but it also bears a close resemblance to ן as that letter appears on some of the coins of John Hyrcanus.² One hesitates, however, to positively regard the letter as a ן, because this form of the ן does not appear on all the coins even of this monarch. Indeed more often the letter assumes a different form. The fact that the ן is written on some of the coins of Hyrcanus in a form similar to the letter on the weight proves the possibility that ן is the correct reading in our legend. Taking the letter as a ן it is a very tempting interpretation to read [יְרָה יִלְמָן קֶרֶשׁ], i. e. "10 gerahs of the sanctuary."³ There are, it is true, some objections which may be urged against this interpretation, but, if we were sure that our first letter were ן, none of them would, I think, be insuperable.

It may be urged that in the Old Testament passages, which mention gerahs as the fractions of a shekel of the sanctuary, קֶרֶשׁ, not מִקְרֶשׁ, is used for "sanctuary." On the other hand it should be noted, that מִקְרֶשׁ as a synonym is also used in the Old Testament itself.⁴

The use of ' as a numeral, which this interpretation assumes, is paralleled by the use of the first letters of the alphabet as numerals on coins which were formerly assigned to Simon, the Maccabee.⁵ If with able numismatists we assign these coins to the revolt of 66-70 A. D.,⁶ they still come from a period very

¹ See the "Schrifttafel" in Lidzbarski's *Nordsemitische Epigraphik*, and Cook's *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, pl. xii.

² See Madden's *Coins of the Jews*, 1 ed. p. 54; 2 ed. p. 78. I have observed the same form on some of the coins.

³ Cf. Ex. 30¹³, Lev. 27²⁵, Nu. 3⁴⁷, 18¹⁶, Ezek. 45¹².

⁴ Cf. Ex. 25⁸, Lev. 12⁴, 21¹², Nu. 10²¹, 18¹.

⁵ See Madden's *Coins of the Jews*, 1 ed, pp. 43-45, and *Encyc. Bib.* col. 4446.

⁶ Cf. Kennedy, in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iii, p. 424 ff., and Hill, *Encyc. Biblica.*, cols. 4446 ff.

near to the date of our weight, and possibly contemporary with it.

Reading each of the three letters of our enigma as above, we might fill out the abbreviation as follows: [ג[רה] י[ל] מ[לך]], "10 gerahs of the king," following the analogy of stamped jar-handles found in the Shephelah.¹ This interpretation does not seem to me as probable intrinsically as the first. In favor of the first interpretation is the fact that the dealer who brought me the weight says that it was picked up by a boy on the Ophel near the Haram, or temple-area.

If, now, the first of these letters be a ך,—a view which will, perhaps, seem more probable to some epigraphists,—we should then, probably, fill out the abbreviation as follows: [ל]פ[י] מ[שקל], or "according to the (standard) weight."² In support of this reading one may cite the use of לפי in the Marseilles inscription, l. 18, and in Numbers, 26⁴⁴. It would be parallel to לקבל on a bronze lion-weight inscribed in Aramaic.³

In so difficult a matter one should not dogmatize. To me, however, it seems slightly more probable that we have in this object a ten gerah weight.

2. A NEW נצך WEIGHT.

Through the same dealer there came to me a second weight. It is, as the drawings will show,



of the same type as weights found by Dr. Bliss in the Shephelah of southern Palestine.⁴ It is of the same general shape,

¹ Cf. Bliss and Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine, 1898-1900*, pp. 112 ff.

² Professor Torrey, who takes the letter for ך, suggests this reading.

³ See Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 193.

⁴ Cf. the Palestine Exploration Fund's *Quarterly Statement*, 1899, pp. 107 ff., 183 ff.; Bliss and Macalister's *Excavations in Palestine, 1898-1900*, pp. 145 ff.; Clermont-Ganneau's *Recueil d'archéologie orientale*, iv, 25 ff.; and Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, iv, 904.

though it approaches more closely to the section of a perfect sphere than one of Dr. Bliss's, and is not, like another of his, perforated. It is made of reddish gray marble, and bears on the top the legend **ל"א**, i. e. **נצח**, which the discussions of a decade or more ago have made so well known. It weighs $153\frac{1}{2}$ grains. The dealer knew nothing of its provenance.